

1985

Curran, Edward: Humanities Chairman Nomination Hearing (1985): Memorandum 06

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FOR TUES. PM
PRIORITY

M E M O R A N D U M

May 6, 1985

TO: Senator
FROM: ADC
RE: Office Appointment with Ed Curran - TUESDAY 4PM

You are scheduled for a courtesy call with Ed Curran on Tuesday at 4pm. As you know, Curran is Reagan's nominee for Chairman of NEH and, if approved will be assuming his third major appointment in the Administration since his service to the Reagan-Bush campaign in 1980. He was Director of NIE for eight months before resigning in a clash with Ted Bell over a proposal by Curran to abolish the agency. He also alienated the research community by trying to forge a new research agenda and terminate contracts with NIE's labs and centers.

He then was appointed Deputy Director of the Peace Corps where he has been since late 1982

The only really long-term job that Curran has held was as headmaster of the National Cathedral School from 1968 to 1980. He has not been professionally involved in higher education and does not hold a doctoral degree. In my mind he does not have the stature that should be required for this chairmanship. The rumors about him abound - i.e. he's an alcoholic and a member of some neo-Nazi organization - but the only things that seem certain are his lack of qualifications and his good political connections.

I recommend that you be cordial but completely neutral in respect to his confirmation. There is going to be a hearing sometime in late May and you will want to pose questions for the record at that time.

Should you want to cover some issues with him, I would suggest the following areas:

- 1) Why he wants the Chairmanship of NEH? Goals and priorities as Chairman? Will he support the long-term survival of the agency?
- 2) Views on public programs that bring humanities programs to the average citizen.
- 3) Would he comply with the requirements of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to file NEH goals and timetables for hiring women and minorities? (Bennett failed to do this and has been widely criticised).

There is absolutely no substantiation to the rumors mentioned above.